A

COMPILATION

ON THE

Slave Trade.

A

COMPILATION

ON THE

SLAVE TRADE,

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED TO THE

People of Ireland.

Omnes homines, Patres Conſcripti, qui de rebus dubiis conſul tant, abodio, amicitiâ, irâ, atque miſerecordiâ, vacuos eſſe decet; haud facile animus rerum providet, ubi illa officiunt.

SALLUST.

BY JAMES MULLALLA, ESQ.

DUBLIN.

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1792.

To the Right Honourable FRANCIS,
Lord Viſcount CAULFIELD.

My Lord,

PERMIT me to requeſt your acceptance of this feeble effort in ſupport of the rights of humanity, and of an injured and oppreſſed part of the human ſpecies.

To induce the Son of a CHARLEMONT to the peruſal of a work of this kind, requires not a dedication: wherefore, my Lord, I have only to offer my moſt fervent prayers, that you may follow the example of your illuſtrious Father, and long, very

long live in the hearts of a grateful and generous nation. I am perſuaded it will be your conſtant ſtudy to emulate the virtues of your noble Sire,

" Nam, te animo repetentem exempla tuorum,
" Et pater Æneas, et avunculus excitet Hector."

I have the honour to be,
My LORD,
An admirer of your riſing virtue
And genius, and your moſt
Obedient, and moſt
Humble ſervant,
J. MULLALLA.

Dublin, 22*d March*, 1792.

Introduction.

TO write in favour of the conſumption of Sugar, in oppoſition to the feelings and ſentiments of the faireſt Daughters of Ireland, is a taſk which I am ill qualified either by nature or inclination to undertake, more eſpecially when I conſider that the Ladies of this country are as remarkable for their charity and humanity as they are celebrated for their beauty. But, however, in almoſt all matters, I have been habituated to pay an implicit deference to the opinion of the fair, yet, on the preſent occaſion, ſhould I differ in any point with them, it ſhall be with the utmoſt delicacy and reſpect for that part of the creation, which I have been taught not only to admire, but to revere. However, in the diſcuſſion of this matter, I muſt entreat that indulgence from my fair countrywomen which the ſubject naturally requires; and that they will give

me

me a patient hearing before they ſummon me before their amiable tribunal, and not ſuffer prejudice or any other conſideration to warp their judgment into haſty concluſions; for I muſt beg leave to aſſure them that they will not be diſpleaſed with my mode of handling an argument, for I am determined whether my arguments be weak or forcible, at leaſt they ſhall have the merit of being directly in *point*.

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TO ſuch pre-eminence are we raiſed by civilization and ſcience, that it is not ſurpriſing that many nations, particularly the Greeks, ſeemed hardly to have acknowledged the reſt of mankind to be of the ſame ſpecies with themſelves. To every other people they gave the degrading appellation of Barbarians; and, in conſequence of their boaſted ſuperiority, they aſſerted a right of dominion

over

over them, in the ſame manner as the ſoul has over the body, and men have over irrational animals.

Extravagant as this pretenſion may now appear, it found admiſſion, to the diſgrace of ancient philoſophy, into all the ſchools. Ariſtotle, full of this opinion, in ſupport of which he employs many arguments more ſubtle than ſolid, adviſed Alexander to govern the Greeks like ſubjects, and the Barbarians as ſlaves; to conſider the former as companions, the latter as creatures of an inferior nature. But the ſentiments of the pupil were more enlarged than thoſe of his maſter, and his experience in governing men taught the monarch what the ſpeculative ſcience of the philoſopher did not.

When barbarous as well as civilized nations have, in all ages, been found to practice ſimilar cuſtoms, the preſumption is ſtrong, that ſuch cuſtoms are both uſeful and founded on juſt and pure principles. Such is the caſe with reſpect to ſervitude; it has had the concurring

teſtimony

teſtimony of all nations which hiſtory has recorded, and the preſcription of antiquity in its favour. This then is an argument, which by the general conſent of mankind may be adduced in favour of ſlavery. But in oppoſition to this, another argument may be deduced from the feelings of man; and that divine ſympathy which God has implanted in the heart for the beſt and moſt generous purpoſes. Here it will be neceſſary to obſerve, that ſlaves may naturally be divided into two claſſes, voluntary and involuntary. In the firſt claſs there is a contract founded on conſent, and a choice of engaging or not in theſe practices, the conſequences of which are certain ſervitude. The involuntary comprehends thoſe who are forced, without any ſuch condition or choice, into a ſituation the moſt degrading to the human ſpecies, becauſe it levels it with the brutal.

It appears that the involuntary ſlaves were of much greater antiquity than the voluntary. In the reign of Pharaoh, we have the firſt account of the latter; they indeed could only ariſe in a ſtate of ſociety. But the involuntary

tary may be ſaid to have originated in the time of Nimrod:

> " Proud Nimrod firſt the bloody chace began,
> " A mighty hunter, and his prey was man."

They might have ariſen in a ſtate of nature, and probably were coeval with the firſt diſſentions of mankind. The liberties of man were invaded not only by a pre-ſuppoſed right founded in the damages of war, but by piracy, which, in the uncivilized ages of the world, contributed in a great meaſure to enſlave the human ſpecies.

Thucydides ſays, that the Greeks, as well as the contemporary Barbarians who inhabited the ſea-coaſts and iſlands, gave themſelves up entirely to it; it was, in fine, their only profeſſion and ſupport. We have alſo the teſtimony of Homer to corroborate this account. He ſhews it to have been a practice during the Trojan war, his deſcriptions of it are of the moſt lively kind; which, had they been as groundleſs as they are beautiful, would have ſaved the reader of reflection and ſenſibility many a ſigh.

Piratical

Piratical expeditions contributed not a little to promote avarice and ambition, and they exerted a ſpirit of enterprize of all others the moſt powerful, being founded on emolument and honour, the ſtrongeſt principles of action. Thus the vileſt paſſions were gratified with impunity. Under the aſſumed idea of honourable adventures, every ſpecies of enormity was perpetrated, and then cloathed in the ſpecious garb of honour. In proportion as nations became refined, the practice of piracy gradually diſappeared; as one of its pillars, *honour*, was removed, but ſtill the other remained, *avarice*, which not only exiſted, but in all ſtates is ready to turn all invention to his own views.

To the immortal honour of Egypt and Athens, ought it to be recorded, that they were the only places where ſlaves were treated with any kind of humanity; the reſt of the world ſeemed to vie with each other in the oppreſſion and degradation of theſe unfortunate people, and meaſured their treatment only by their own paſſion and caprice; and by leaving them with-

out any poſſibility of appeal, rendered their ſituation beyond conception melancholy. Commerce may be conſidered as the firſt circumſtance which gave riſe to the ſavage treatment which generally fell to the lot of ſlaves, for when men were conſidered as poſſeſſions, and if, like cattle, they could be bought and ſold; it is eaſy to conceive that, being held in the ſame conſideration, they would conſequently be treated in the ſame manner. The commerce therefore which took place in the early ages of antiquity, by which brute and ſlave were taken as ſynonimous, ſoon cauſed them to be conſidered greatly inferior to the human ſpecies. Hence proceeded that barbarous treatment which might not unreaſonably ariſe from ſo deſpicable an opinion. They were tamed like brutes, by hunger and the laſh; and to render them commodious inſtruments of labour for their maſters, their education was directed to the ſame end.

Theſe things did not fail to produce inſtantaneouſly its own effect, it by debaſing their minds, weakened their faculties, and made them

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appear endowed with capacities inferior to the reſt of mankind. This effect of ſervile treatment is even noticed by Homer ;

" For half his ſenſes Jove conveys away,
" Whom once he dooms to ſee the ſervile day."

It may, perhaps, be conſidered as a futile taſk, to attempt to refute theſe cruel ſentiments of the ancients, and prove that ſlaves are not an inferior order of beings, particularly as the cauſes of this inferior appearance have already been ſhewn to have been incidental, originating in the combined effects of the treatment and commerce, vanity and pride. However, I ſhall make ſome few obſervations by way of refutation. Seneca, who ſaw many of theſe unfortunate people, ſays, " What is a knight, a libertine, or a ſlave? Are they not names aſſumed either from injury or ambition? He whom we call ſlave, is born in the ſame manner as ourſelves; he enjoys the ſame luminaries; he breathes in the ſame manner; and expires in the ſame manner.

I could, if neceſſary, enumerate many inſtances of the fidelity, patience, and valour of

of the ſervile race, and the important ſervices they have rendered to individuals, and the ſocieties to which they belong.

I could likewiſe mention the ſtrongeſt proofs of the genius of thoſe in ſervile condition, in the perſon of Æſop and Phædras. But under the mild influence of religion, ſlavery was aboliſhed; but in two centuries after its ſuppreſſion, it was revived by the Portugueſe, who made a deſcent into Africa, and committing depredations on the coaſt, firſt carried the wretched inhabitants into ſlavery.

Our own anceſtors, together with the Spaniards, French, and moſt of the maritime powers of Europe, ſoon imitated the piratical example, and thus did the Europeans, to their eternal infamy, renew a cuſtom, which their own anceſtors had before exploded, from a conſciouſneſs of its impiety.

The miſerable and unfortunate Africans flew from the coaſt, and ſought a retreat from perſecution in the interior parts of the country. But few retreats can eſcape the penetrating eye of avarice. They were ſtill purſued,

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and ſurpriſed, by the cruel and avaricious European, in the heart of their country, and hurried into ſlavery.

Liberty can neither be bought or ſold; neither can he who is called *maſter*, have a juſt right to command the actions of him who is called a *ſlave*; for as every reaſonable being is accountable for his actions, it is evident, no ſuch right can juſtly exiſt, and conſequently human liberty is, of courſe, beyond the poſſibility of either ſale or purchaſe; for he who aſſumes the power of ſelling the liberty of man, can extend that power only to the body, as the mind can neither be confined or bound.

Although chriſtianity, for obvious reaſons, has not directly furniſhed us with precepts for the abolition of ſlavery, yet, its general tenor ſufficiently militates againſt the ſavage cuſtom; as the firſt doctrine it enjoins is brotherly love; it commands us to love our neighbours as ourſelves, and to do unto them as we would they ſhould do unto us. And how can we fulfil this ſcheme of univerſal benevolence, who reduce unfortunate perſons, againſt their will, to the

the moſt miſerable of all human conditions? who conſider them as private property, and treat them not as brothers, nor as the ſame ſtock with ourſelves, but as an animal of the brute creation?

If liberty be only an adventitious right; if men are by no means ſuperior to brutes; if every ſocial duty be a curſe; if cruelty is to be eſteemed; if chriſtianity be a lie, and murder ſtrictly honourable; then may the African trade be purſued without either remorſe of conſcience or the imputation of a crime.

I will not here debaſe myſelf ſo far as to enumerate the ignominious liſt of thoſe writers, who devote their abilities to juſtify, by policy, what morality condemns. In an age where ſo many errors are boldly laid open, it would be unpardonable to conceal any truth that is intereſting to humanity. What I have hitherto advanced may tend to convince the oppreſſors of the negroes, that they are cruel to the prejudice of their real intereſts. But in the mean time, until ſome conſiderable revolution ſhall make

make the evidence of this great truth felt, it may not be improper to purſue this ſubject further. I will firſt endeavour to prove, that there is no reaſon of ſtate which can authoriſe ſlavery. I will not be afraid to ſummon to the tribunal of reaſon and juſtice thoſe governments which tolerate this cruelty, or which even are not aſhamed to make it the baſis of their power.

The philoſophic Monteſquieu could not prevail upon himſelf to treat the queſtion concerning ſlavery in a ſerious light. In reality, it is degrading reaſon to employ it, I will not ſay in defending, but even in refuting, an abuſe ſo repugnant to it. Whoever juſtifies ſo odious a ſyſtem, deſerves the philoſopher's utmoſt contempt, and the negroe's dagger. " If you touch me, (ſaid Clariſſa to Lovelace,) that moment I kill myſelf;" and I would ſay to him who attempted to deprive me of my liberty, if you approach me, I will ſtab you. In this caſe I ſhould reaſon better than Clariſſa; becauſe defending my liberty, or, in other words,

my

my life, is my firſt duty; to regard that of another, is only a ſecondary conſideration; and if all other circumſtances were the ſame, the death of a criminal is more comfortable to juſtice than that of an innocent perſon.

Will it be ſaid, that he who wants to make me a ſlave does me no injury, but that he only makes uſe of his rights? Where are thoſe rights? Who hath ſtamped upon them ſo ſacred a character as to ſilence mine? From nature I hold the right of ſelf-defence; nature therefore has not given to another the right of attacking me. If you think yourſelf authoriſed to oppreſs me, becauſe you are ſtronger and more ingenious than I am, do not complain if my vigorous arm ſhall plunge a dagger into your heart; do not complain when in your tortured entrails you ſhall feel the pangs of death from poiſon which has been conveyed into your food. I am ſtronger and more ingenious than you; fall a victim therefore, in your turn, and expiate the crime of having been an oppreſſor.

He who ſupports the ſyſtem of ſlavery is the enemy of the whole human race. He divides

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it into two ſocieties of legal aſſaſſins; the oppreſſors and the oppreſſed. It is the ſame thing as proclaiming to the world, if you preſerve your life, immediately take away mine, for I want to have your's. But the right of ſlavery, you ſay, extends only to the right of labour and the privation of liberty, not of life.

What! does not the maſter who diſpoſes of my ſtrength at his pleaſure, likewiſe diſpoſe of my life, which depends on the voluntary and proper uſe of my faculties? What is exiſtence to him who has not the diſpoſal of it? I cannot kill my ſlave; but I can make him bleed under the whip of the executioner; I can overwhelm him with ſorrows, drudgery and want; I can injure him every way, and ſecretly undermine the principles and ſprings of his life; I can ſmother, by ſlow puniſhments, the wretched infant which a Negro woman carries in her womb. Thus the laws protect the ſlave againſt a violent death, only to leave to my cruelty the right of making him die by degrees. A highway-man attacks you, and

takes your money; the trader carries even your perſon; the one invades the rights of ſociety, the other thoſe of nature. This indubitably is founded in fact; and if there exiſted a religion which authoriſed, or even by its ſilence tolerated ſuch enormities; if ſuch a religion exiſted, its miniſters ought to be maſſacred under the ruins of their altars.

But it may be ſaid, that the negroes are born for ſlavery; as their diſpoſitions are narrow, treacherous, and wicked; and that they themſelves allow the ſuperiority of our underſtandings, and in a manner acknowledge the juſtice of our authority. As ſlavery deſtroys all the ſprings of the ſoul, the minds of the Negroes muſt be contracted; becauſe they are under no obligation to ſpeak truths to their tyrants, they are therefore treacherous; becauſe we have abuſed their ignorance, they acknowledge our ſuperiority of underſtanding; they admit the juſtice of our authority, becauſe we have abuſed their weakneſs. I might as well ſay, that the Indians are a ſpecies of men born to be cruſhed to death; becauſe

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there are fanatics among them, who throw themſelves under the wheels of their idol's car before the temple of their deity.

It may be further advanced, that theſe negroes were born ſlaves; but will any one attempt to perſuade me, that a man can be the property of a ſovereign, or the property of a father, the wife of her huſband, the domeſtic of his maſter, or the negro the property of a planter. But it is ſaid theſe ſlaves ſold themſelves. Could a man ever by compact, or by an oath, permit another to uſe and abuſe him? If he aſſented to this compact, or confirmed it by an oath, it was in the tranſport of ignorance or folly; and he is releaſed from it the moment he either knows himſelf, or his reaſon returns.

But you may inſiſt, they were taken in war. What does this ſignify to you? Permit the conqueror to make what ill uſe he pleaſes of his own victory. Do not let us become his accomplices. But they were criminals, and condemned in their native country

try to ſervitude. Who was it that condemned them? Is it not ſelf-evident, that in a deſpotic ſtate there is no criminal but the tyrant? For the ſubject of an abſolute prince is the ſame as the ſlave in a ſtate repugnant to nature. Therefore every thing that contributes to keep a man in ſuch a ſtate is an attempt againſt his perſon. But the tyrant can do nothing of himſelf, he is only the firſt mover of thoſe efforts which all his ſubjects exert to their own mutual oppreſſion. He keeps them in a ſtate of perpetual war, which renders robberies, treaſons, and aſſaſſinations lawful. Thus, like the blood which flows in his veins, all crimes originate from his heart, and return thither as to their primary ſource. Caligula uſed to ſay, that if the whole human race had but one head, he ſhould have taken pleaſure in cutting it off. Socrates would have ſaid, that if all crimes were heaped upon one head, that ought to be the one to be ſtruck off. Wherefore let us endeavour to make the light of reaſon and the ſentiments of nature take place of the blind ferocity of our anceſtors. Let us break the bonds of ſo many victims to our mercenary princi-

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ples, ſhould we even be obliged to diſcard a commerce which is founded only on injuſtice, and whoſe object is luxury. But even this is not neceſſary. There is no occaſion for abſtaining from the uſe of ſugar, or any other article of Weſt Indian commodity, which perhaps cuſtom has endeared to us, and our conſtitutions may require. Theſe articles we may ſtill draw from our colonies, without peopling them with ſlaves. Theſe productions may be cultivated by the hands of freemen, and then be reaped without remorſe. The iſlands are filled with blacks, whoſe fetters have been broken. They ſucceſſively clear the ſmall plantations that have been given them, or which they have acquired by their induſtry. Such of theſe unfortunate men, as ſhould recover their liberty and indulgence, would quietly live upon the ſame manual labours that would then be free and advantageous them. The vaſſals of Denmark, who have lately been made free, have not abandoned their ploughs. However, whenever we confer liberty on theſe unhappy beings as a reward for their œconomy, good behaviour,

haviour, or induſtry, we cannot but be extremely careful to ſubject them to our laws and manners, and to offer them our ſuperfluities. We muſt give them a country, give them intereſts to ſtudy, productions to cultivate, and an object adequate to their reſpective taſtes, and our colonies will never want hands, which being eaſed of their chains, will be more active and robuſt. But to what tribunal ſhall I refer the cauſe of humanity, which ſo many are in conſpiracy to betray? Sovereigns of the earth, you alone can bring about this revolution! The humanity of Hibernia's fair daughters in abſtaining from ſugar, evinces their goodneſs of heart, but is inadequate to effectuate the plan. But kings, by refuſing the ſanction of their authority to the criminal traffic of ſlavery, where men are turned into ſo many herds of cattle, will put a final ſtop to this diſgraceful trade. You nations of Europe permit me to make an appeal to your pity and compaſſion. Your ſlaves ſtand in no need of either your generoſity or counſels in order to break the ſacrilegious yoke of their oppreſſion. Nature ſpeaks a more powerful lan-

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guage than philoſophy or intereſt. Some whites already maſſacred, have expiated a part of your crimes; already have two colonies of fugitive negroes been eſtabliſhed, to whom treaties and power give a perfect ſecurity from your attempts. Poiſon hath at different times been the inſtrument of their vengeance. Several have eluded your oppreſſion by a voluntary death. Theſe are indications of an impending ſtorm, that the negroes only want a chief ſufficiently courageous to lead to vengeance and ſlaughter.

Where is this great man to be found, whom nature perhaps owes to the honour of the human ſpecies? Where is this new Spartacus, who will not find a Craſſus? then will the black code be no more, and the white will be a dreadful one, if the conqueror only regards the right of repriſals. Till this revolution takes place, the negroes groan under the yoke of oppreſſion, the deſcription of which cannot but intereſt us more and more in their deſtiny.

I muſt

I muſt now beg leave to recall my ideas from Africa's burning ſands, a country that can neither excite the mercenary views of the trader, the curioſity of the traveller, nor the humanity of the philoſopher; a country, where the abominable and inhuman cuſtom of ſelling its inhabitants hath ever prevailed; wherefore I ſhall briefly, by way of concluſion, make a few obſervations on my native land, which for many years has exhibited a melancholy picture of oppreſſion and ſlavery; but by the ſtrenuous exertions of ſome of its virtuous and patriotic ſons, we have nearly ſhaken off the diſgraceful trammels of another country. But it ſtill affords a melancholy proof of the degradation of the human mind to perceive, at the moment the Proteſtants of this country are freeing themſelves from every veſtige of ſervility and dependence, and expreſſing the utmoſt abhorrence and deteſtation at every act of the ſiſter kingdom, that either her ſelfiſh policy or ill-timed jealouſy has impoſed, or by the corruption of the times may even now attempt to impoſe. I ſay, in ſuch an enlightened mo-

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ment as this to ſee the *Proteſtants* of Ireland refuſing their *Roman Catholic* brethern the rights which, as men and fellow ſubjects, they ought to enjoy, is diſgraceful, unwiſe, and abſurd; but happy I am to perceive, that the *Roman Catholics* here came forward, and unequivocally avowed their political and religious ſentiments, at the moment when the *wiſdom* of the Legiſlature had decided againſt their juſt rights, when a majority was found in an Iriſh Houſe of Commons to reject their modeſt and humble petitions, and at the critical period when they could not reaſonably indulge the hope of any farther conceſſions from the *juſtice* of their Legiſlature. Such declarations do equal honour to their underſtanding and hearts; aud I hope to ſee the day, when in every reſpect they may participate in every bleſſing that a free people ſhould enjoy; and I fully ſubſcribe to the opinion of that great and good man, the Right Honourable Henry Grattan, that the emancipation of our *Roman Catholic* brethern is near at hand; or in the language

language of that truly ſublime orator;—"believe me, you may as well plant your foot on the earth, and hope by that reſiſtance to ſtop the annual revolution which advances you to that morning ſun, which is to ſhine alike on the Proteſtant and the Catholic, as you can hope to arreſt the progreſs of that other light, reaſon and juſtice, which approach to liberate the Catholic, and liberalize the Proteſtant. Even now the queſtion is on its way, and making its deſtined and irreſiſtable progreſs, which you, with all your authority, will have no power to reſiſt, no more than any other great truth, or any great ordinance of nature, or any law of motion which mankind is free to contemplate, but cannot reſiſt, there is a juſtice linked to their cauſe, and a truth that ſets off their application."

It would be doing injuſtice to many pious and truly charitable ladies in the metropolis, not to mention that they have abſtained from the uſe of ſugar, from a two-fold motive, to alleviate the ſufferings of the unhappy negroe, and from the œconomical ſaving on the account

account made in their families to make larger contributions to the ſeveral charitable inſtitutions, the *Aſylum*, in particular; an inſtitution which not only reflects the higheſt honour on the humanity of the founders, but harbours the inculcation of every virtue from the almoſt inſpired lips of the amiable Divine, whoſe enlightened zeal dignifies and adorns that charitable Manſion. To the reſt of the fair daughters of Hibernia, I ſhall only ſay, "Go you and do likewiſe."

1ſt April, 1792.